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**Action Item Calendar**

**Wednesday** (September 18): [PARCC Field Test](#) confirmation  
**Thursday** (September 19): [SurveyWorks](#) information form due  
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## **Notes from Commissioner Gist**

### **1. Patricia Page honored as 2014 Rhode Island Teacher of the Year**

It was my pleasure to join Governor Chafee, Board Chair Mancuso, and many elected officials, school leaders, and teachers from around the state on Monday to honor Patricia Page, of East Greenwich High School, as our 2014 Rhode Island Teacher of the Year. With her background in corporate training and management, Pat has been a strong advocate of project-based learning.

When she taught elementary school in the Meadowbrook School, in East Greenwich, her third-grade students planted a “learning garden,” where they learned to design and calculate bed sizes, research crops, manage budgets, observe and record plant growth and insect populations, harvest crops, and turn student-grown healthy food into meals. What a great way advance knowledge and skills through a single learning project!

At East Greenwich High, Pat is well known for the “elevator speech,” through which her students learn to pitch a business idea clearly and concisely – in front of an audience. This is a great example of a real-life lesson linking school to the high expectations of the world of work.

As one of her colleagues says about Pat's teaching: "Her classroom is always abuzz with activity. Students of all levels receive multiple opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and showcase their best work – and the students always rise to the occasion!"

Perhaps one of her former students said it best in a letter: "The tools you have given me will be the foundation for the success that I will create for myself in life."

I will enjoy working with Pat and with other great teachers over the course of this school year, and I wish her all the best as she pursues the honor of National Teacher of the Year. And remember: We'll be holding our annual Educator Recognition Ceremony on September 26, at 4 p.m., at the Orchard Farms Elementary School, 1555 Scituate Ave., Cranston. You are welcome to join us as we honor some of the many excellent educators from schools and communities across our state.

## **2. URI Honors Colloquium focuses on Great Public Schools**

The University of Rhode Island Fall 2013 Honors Colloquium is under way, and the topic of the current colloquium is of interest to all of us: "Great Schools: Everyone's Right? Everyone's Responsibility?" I would answer "yes" to both questions. Colloquium sessions take place every Tuesday evening, at 7:30 p.m., through December 10, in Edwards Auditorium, at the URI Kingston Campus. This Tuesday (September 17), Board Chair Mancuso and I will participate in a panel on the topic of "The State of Education in Rhode Island. Other sessions include a diversity-week keynote address by Pedro Noguera, of New York University (October 1), a session on the Common Core State

Standards (November 5), and a discussion about what we can learn from the education system in Finland (December 10). A complete colloquium schedule is available [here](#).

## **From RIDE**

### ***Assessments:***

#### **3. May 2013 NECAP Science results release schedule announced**

The results of the May 2013 administration of the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) Science tests for grades 4, 8, and 11 will soon be available to schools and districts. The planned release schedule is as follows:

**September 18** (9 a.m.): Schools and districts will be able to access a password-protected site to download all spring 2013 NECAP Science results reports, including School and District Results Reports, School and District Summary Reports, Item Analysis Reports, Released Items and Support Materials documents, and the Guide to Using the 2013 NECAP Science Reports. Letters with user-name and password information along with instructions for accessing the password-protected NECAP results online have already been mailed. If you did not receive your information, please call the NECAP Service Center, at (877) 632-7774.

Schools and districts will also have access to confidential student-level data files that contain demographics, scores, questionnaire results, and student performance on the released items.

*Note:* All summative results are embargoed until **September 24**, at 9 a.m., and *cannot* be shared with the public until this date and time.

**September 24** (9 a.m.): Non-confidential results will be made available to the public (non-confidential results are those that do not contain any student-level information). Additionally, schools and districts will no longer be required to provide a password to access the non-confidential results. May 2013 NECAP Science results information (including our annual NECAP Science results report) will be posted on the RIDE website, at:

[www.ride.ri.gov/NECAP-results](http://www.ride.ri.gov/NECAP-results)

If you have any questions about the release of NECAP Science results, please contact Dr. Kevon Tucker-Seeley ([kevon.tucker-seeley@ride.ri.gov](mailto:kevon.tucker-seeley@ride.ri.gov) or 222-8494).

#### **4. PARCC releases information on technology specifications, accommodations for the field test**

The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) has drafted a guidance document to assist schools in confirming their technology capacity for the field test in Spring 2014. The document contains tables with device specifications and also bandwidth recommendations, as well as important information on security requirements. Computer-based accessibility features and embedded accommodations are also listed, along with their expected availability dates. Please note that as some parts of the PARCC assessment delivery system are still in development, some functionality for the field test and

some accessibility features and accommodations may not be available for the Spring 2014 Field Test but are in development for expected inclusion in the operational test.

For the full list of device specifications and accommodations available during the PARCC Field Test, please see:

<http://www.parcconline.org/sites/parcc/files/FullTechnologySpecificationsforPARCCFieldTestV1-September2013.pdf>

**5. *Reminder:* LEAs must confirm participation in PARCC field test by Wednesday (September 18)**

Last week, PARCC e-mailed letters to LEA testing coordinators and superintendents about their selection for participation in the 2014 PARCC Field Test. These letters contain important information about the field test specific to the schools in your LEA, as well as a link for districts to confirm their schools' participation in the field test no later than **Wednesday** (September 18). Please check your spam folder for an e-mail from [noreply@pearson.com](mailto:noreply@pearson.com) dated Thursday, September 5.

If you have any questions about the field test, or if you did not receive an e-mailed letter from Pearson on behalf of PARCC, please contact Dr. Kevon Tucker-Seeley, at [Kevon.tucker-seeley@ride.ri.gov](mailto:Kevon.tucker-seeley@ride.ri.gov) or 222-8494.

***Awards:***

**6. Green Ribbon Schools award applications due January 15, 2014**



We are pleased to announce that Rhode Island will once again participate in the Green Ribbon Schools program. RIDE is looking to identify schools that have the least impact on the environment, the most positive impact on the health of students and staff, and the most effective preparation of students for careers and citizenship in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. From the pool of applicants, RIDE will submit up to four nominations to the U.S. Department of Education for national award consideration.

Modeled after Blue Ribbon Schools Program, the Green Ribbon Schools award recognizes exemplary achievement in environmental impact, health, and environmental education. Rhode Island is the only New England state to participate in both years of the program, which produced four national Green Ribbon Schools award recipients: Classical High School, Nathan Bishop Middle School, Providence Career and Technical Academy, and The Compass School.

All K-12 public and nonpublic Rhode Island Schools are eligible to apply. Schools that would like to be nominated for this award must complete and e-mail the application to [Joseph.daSilva@ride.ri.gov](mailto:Joseph.daSilva@ride.ri.gov) by **January 15, 2014**.

If you have questions about the Green Ribbon Schools program, you may call Joseph da Silva, our School Construction Coordinator, at 222-4294, or e-mail him at [Joseph.daSilva@ride.ri.gov](mailto:Joseph.daSilva@ride.ri.gov).

For more information and to obtain the 2013-14 Rhode Island Green Ribbon Schools application, please visit:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/FundingFinance/SchoolConstructionProgram/SchoolFacilities.aspx>

### ***Transportation:***

#### **7. School Bus Monitor Variance Reports due the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month**

The eRIDE system is open for submitting 2013-14 monthly bus-monitor reports. Variance reports for each month are due no later than the 15<sup>th</sup> of the next month. As a reminder, if your LEA transported K-5 students in July or August with a monitor or under a variance, you must submit a variance report for each month. If you have any questions regarding access to the bus-monitor report module through eRIDE, please contact Cindy Brown, at 222-4257 or [Cynthia.Brown@ride.ri.gov](mailto:Cynthia.Brown@ride.ri.gov), or Patti Durfee, at [patti.durfee@ride.ri.gov](mailto:patti.durfee@ride.ri.gov) or 222-4273.

### ***Tools and resources:***

#### **8. Virtual modules to help school leaders with school reform and improvement**

Through our Race to the Top grant, RIDE developed virtual on-line modules that can help all school leaders in Rhode Island improve their schools. This first set of modules is designed to help school leaders and their leadership teams use data to develop goals regarding school improvement. Please feel free to begin at the beginning or to jump in to a module that seems to fit your need. The modules are posted on our website, at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/TeachersAdministrators/OtherToolsInformation/AcademyforTransformativeLeadership.aspx>

### ***Webinars:***

## **9. RIDE schedules webinar on Next Generation Science Standards**

In May, Rhode Island became the first state to adopt the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). We invite district and building administrators to join us for a webinar on our implementation plan for the NGSS, on **Tuesday** (September 17) from 1 to 2 p.m. The webinar is designed to share information on the NGSS and on our plan for NGSS implementation and to provide a forum for questions and answers. Peter McLaren and Jennifer Solek (Golenia), Science and Technology Specialists at the RIDE, will be presenters. To participate in the webinar:

Click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://www3.gotomeeting.com/join/194389646/20000000000370713>

Connect to the voice conference:

Toll: (702) 489-0007

Access Code: 370-566-219

If you have questions about the webinar, e-mail [peter.mclaren@ride.ri.gov](mailto:peter.mclaren@ride.ri.gov) or call 222-8454.

### ***Diploma System:***

#### **10. RIDE adds four tests to list of other approved assessments for meeting graduation requirements**

Professional standards and legal precedent have established that when a state assessment is used as part of a conjunctive system

of graduation requirements it is necessary to provide students with multiple opportunities to meet that requirement. The 2011 Secondary School Regulations, L-6-3.3(b), outline a sequential series of opportunities that includes retaking the state assessment as well as meeting the requirement through performance on other external, standardized measures of student achievement. The intent of the other RIDE-approved tests is to allow students the opportunity to provide evidence from an external, standardized assessment that they have met or exceeded the assessment expectation required to earn a high-school diploma. Four new standardized tests have been added to the other RIDE-approved test list, effective September 1. The full list of tests and accompanying cut scores can be found on our website, at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Diploma-System/RIDE-Approved-Tests-Revised2013.pdf>.

### ***Certification:***

#### **11. New certification tests in effect**

We have updated the certification-testing document to reflect the new set of certification tests that went into effect on September 1. The document is located on our website. Please go to <http://www.ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Teachers-and-Administrators-Excellent-Educators/Educator-Certification/Cert-main-page/Certification-Tests-September-1-2013.pdf> for details. If you have questions about the new certification tests, please call Hilda Potrzeba (222-8891).

### ***Surveys:***

**12. SurveyWorks school-information request form due Thursday (September 19) – *Action Item***

Yesterday (September 12), the SurveyWorks team e-mailed site coordinators at each school requesting that they complete an important school-information request form. This form will help SurveyWorks provide each school with sufficient material for implementation of this year's surveys. The form can be accessed by using the unique URL address that was provided in the e-mail. Site coordinators need to complete the request as soon as possible. The deadline for completing the request is **Thursday** (September 19). Thank you for your prompt response in meeting the site-coordinator nomination deadline this week and for your continued support of the SurveyWorks process.

***Workforce Readiness:***

**13. Congressman Langevin's office, RIDE to co-sponsor Health Careers Pathways event**

Along with Congressman Langevin, we invite you to attend a Health Careers Pathways Event on **November 2**. This event is primarily intended for school counselors, students, and families who want to participate in a morning of interactive panels consisting of health-careers pathway students, postsecondary administrators, and Rhode Island healthcare-business leaders. Attendees will have the opportunity to hear first-hand about how Rhode Island Health Careers Pathways programs prepare students to successfully engage in academic and career opportunities after they graduate.

The conference will be held from 9:30 a.m. – noon, at the East Greenwich campus of New England Institute of Technology, 1 New England Tech Blvd. Congressman Langevin and Commissioner Gist will be the featured keynote speakers. Counselors will receive an e-mail early next week with the details about the event and registration instructions. Please share this information with your school counselors and with any faculty members who are involved with Health Career pathways. You can access the [event flyer for distribution to students and families](#) on our website. More information is on our site, at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/multiplepathways>.

### **From the U.S. Department of Education**

#### **14. Education Secretary Duncan writes to superintendents to mark start of school year**

In case you have not yet received your copy, below is the text of a letter that Education Secretary Arne Duncan sent last week to superintendents:

Dear Colleagues:

I know from my own experience leading a school district that this time of year is especially exciting—and challenging. New students. New staff members. In many states, you're implementing new standards that come with even higher expectations and greater accountability. And in too many places, you and your teams are doing it all with less money.

So I wanted to write as this new school year gets under way and thank you.

Here in Washington, I'm starting my fifth full school year as Secretary of Education. My job comes with its own challenges, but one of its great benefits is the vantage point I have to observe and support the great progress that's happening in American education. We have a lot to celebrate, including the highest high school graduation rate in three decades and more young adults attending college than a decade ago.

Yet we have a long way to go. Too many young people—and especially too many students from low-income and vulnerable populations—aren't participating in that success.

This week, I will visit early learning centers, schools, a community college, a university, and a military base in four Southwestern states. The theme of this year's back-to-school bus tour is "Strong Start, Bright Future," reflecting the importance of starting the school year with energy and focus, investing in early education for our youngest learners, and remaining committed to reforms that better serve our students and support our educators. I invite you to [follow along online](#) and hear what some of your colleagues are doing toward our shared goals. (If you're a hashtag user, this trip is #EDtour13.)

I always return to my office encouraged and informed by what I've seen on the road. My staff and I meet superintendents, board members, principals, teachers, paraprofessionals, and staff who inspire us. We hear from parents, state and local elected officials, and business and

higher education leaders who are pitching in to make their schools and communities stronger. And we meet phenomenal students.

As we travel around the country, one thing is clear. There are innovative teachers and leaders working hard to build successful school systems that serve all students. That's why this department has now provided more than [40 states with flexibility](#) from the rigid provisions of No Child Left Behind. As you know, officially it's the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and it's long overdue for a fix. In [an op ed](#) I wrote recently, I encouraged Members of Congress to look outside of Washington for the best solutions.

The school year that just passed was an unusually challenging one. The illogical federal budget cuts known as the sequester hurt disadvantaged students and schools while they were already down.

In Newtown, Connecticut, 20 students and six adults were gunned down at an elementary school—a horrific tragedy but, unbelievably, far from the only gun violence that shook communities last year. As one part of the federal government's response, we joined several agencies in producing [guides for developing emergency operations plans](#). I hope you will use these guides to inform your prevention and protection efforts, but I also hope you will never have an emergency situation occur.

It is often difficult for students to excel if they don't feel safe. The same can be true in situations where families don't have sufficient financial resources to obtain the health care that their children may need. Please join me and other



community leaders across the country in encouraging America's estimated 50 million uninsured who will be eligible for coverage to enroll in the Health Insurance Marketplace starting in October. You can find information tailored to school communities [here](#). Every family, neighbor, educator, health care provider, and business knows the importance of well-educated and healthy children.

Finally, I want to make sure you know about the Department of Education's [Race to the Top program](#) for school districts. The deadline to apply for this year's \$120 million competition is October 3. It's a great opportunity for districts and their partners to think creatively about how to personalize learning and support innovation.

I try not to e-mail you more than once or twice a year, but if you want to stay in closer touch with the Department of Education, I invite you and your colleagues to sign up for e-mail updates and resources from ED, at [www.ed.gov/emailupdates](http://www.ed.gov/emailupdates).

Whether this is your first year in your position or your 15<sup>th</sup>, I wish you, your team, and your students a fantastic school year.

Best wishes,  
Arne Duncan  
U.S. Secretary of Education

**15. Constitution Day/Citizenship day is Tuesday  
(September 17)**

Please see this notice from the U.S. Department of Education Office of Communications and Outreach:

**Tuesday** (September 17) is [Constitution Day/Citizenship Day](#), commemorating the September 17, 1787, signing of the U.S. Constitution. In recognition, Congress has mandated that every educational institution receiving federal funds hold an educational program about the seminal document. To assist students and educators in their studies, free online resources are available from the Department's Federal Resources for Educational Excellence ([FREE](#)) web site, as well as the [Library of Congress](#), the [National Archives and Records Administration](#), the [National Endowment for the Humanities](#), the [Office of Personnel Management](#), and the [U.S. Senate](#).

### **From other state offices and agencies**

#### **16. Attorney General's Office announces texting-while-driving prevention campaign**

Please see this message from Attorney General Peter F. Kilmartin, which we will also send to all high-school principals:

Last school year, I joined with the R.I. State Police, the R.I. Department of Transportation (RIDOT), and AT&T to bring AT&T's powerful "Txtng & Drivng...It Can Wait" awareness campaign to schools throughout Rhode Island. By the end of the academic year, we visited 19 schools, where over 7,000 students took the pledge to not text and drive.

I strongly believe the video and presentation had a big impact on the students. In school after school, the whole

auditorium was silent when the lights came up after the compelling story of real teens whose lives had been forever impacted by texting while driving.

While the program was very well received by the students, and I am confident changed their behavior, this is an issue that will not go away anytime soon. Each year there is a new group of young drivers who face the temptation of texting while driving.

I am pleased to announce that the Office of Attorney General is continuing its partnership with the State Police, RIDOT, and AT&T to bring the “It Can Wait” program to Rhode Island high schools.

In addition to the compelling video and presentation, we have added a new element to our program – a desktop driving simulator. The simulator allows the driver to experience the consequences of taking your eyes and hands off the wheel to read or return a text.

By sharing the sobering consequences of texting while driving, we hope to change young drivers’ attitudes about the subject and encourage the public, especially younger drivers, to put away cell phones while behind the wheel.

Texting while driving is not only a choice, but an illegal choice. Young drivers, in particular, are inexperienced behind the wheel and don’t need additional distractions. As we have learned, the consequences of sending or reading a text can be deadly.

I urge you to participate in this important program and schedule an assembly at your school. To schedule a date for us to bring the “It Can Wait” program to your school, please contact Emily Martineau in my office, at 274-4400 ext. 2007 or [emartineau@riag.ri.gov](mailto:emartineau@riag.ri.gov).

Sincerely,  
Peter F. Kilmartin

### **From other organizations**

#### **17. Schools invited to apply for community grants**

Please see this message from CVS Caremark:

**CVS Caremark: Community Grants** give funds to nonprofit organizations for programs targeting children with disabilities, programs focusing on health and rehabilitation services, public schools promoting a greater level of inclusion in student activities and extracurricular programs, and initiatives that give greater access to physical movement and play. Additionally, some contributions are made to organizations that provide uninsured individuals with needed care, in particular programs where the care received is of higher quality and delivered by providers who participate in accountable community health-care programs. Maximum award: \$5,000. Eligibility: nonprofit organizations with programs targeting children with disabilities; public schools with programs for children under age 18 with disabilities. Deadline: **October 31**.

**18. American Red Cross instructor training available for teachers, school nurses**

Please see this notice from the American Red Cross:

American Red Cross Instructor Training is available for teachers and school nurses for the current school year. The free (due to the limited amount of funding available for the trainings, registration is on a first-come, first-served basis) training is available for teachers and school nurse-teachers to become certified for two years as First Aid & CPR/AED Instructor, and authorized to teach all components of the First Aid/CPR/AED Program, including optional first-aid modules: Asthma Inhaler, Anaphylaxis and Epinephrine Auto-Injectors, and Using a Tourniquet lessons.

The First Aid/CPR/AED course incorporates the latest science and teaches participants to recognize and care for a variety of first-aid emergencies such as burns, cuts, scrapes, and sudden illnesses; head, neck, and back injuries; heat and cold emergencies; and how to respond to breathing and cardiac emergencies to help victims of any age - adults (about 12 years and older) and pediatric (infants and children up to 12 years of age). This course has been updated to include 2010 Emergency Cardiovascular Care Guidelines.

For additional information and to schedule a 12-hour (9 classroom hours and 3 online hours) training (minimum 6 participants) for your LEA, contact:

Lori DelVaglio

American Red Cross/Preparedness Health and Safety  
Services

Phone: (203) 621-1908

Cell: (203) 583-6534

Fax: (203) 655-2589

E-mail: [Lori.DelVaglio@redcross.org](mailto:Lori.DelVaglio@redcross.org)

**19. Conference scheduled on education of the gifted and talented**

Please see this message from the Maine Educators of the Gifted and Talented:

Maine will host the annual New England Conference on the Gifted and Talented. The conference will be held Thursday, October 24, and Friday, October 25, at the Holiday Inn by the Bay, Portland. The conference will bring together teachers, parents, administrators, counselors, health professionals, and others from throughout New England to hear about the newest developments in the field of gifted education.

The keynote speaker, Dr. Mary Landrum Slade, will present: Building a Consultative and Collaborative Approach to Gifted Education: A Paradigm Shift. In addition to the keynote addresses, about 40 breakout sessions will focus on cutting edge developments in gifted education

For more information about, or to register for, the New England Conference on Gifted and Talented Education, go to [www.necgt.org](http://www.necgt.org) , or e-mail [necgt2013@gmail.com](mailto:necgt2013@gmail.com)

**20. Healthy School Coalition schedules breakfast for school leaders**

Please see this message from the Rhode Island Healthy Schools Coalition:

You are cordially invited to the Breakfast for School Leaders 2013, taking place at the Crowne Plaza, in Warwick, on October 2. Please follow this link to register:

[www.breakfastforschoolleaders2013.eventbrite.com](http://www.breakfastforschoolleaders2013.eventbrite.com)

***RIDE will post this field memo on Tuesday, at:***

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/InsideRIDE/CommissionerDeborahAGist/FieldMemos.aspx>